I

General Nivelle that he should not send any document to the British General Headquarters without making sure that it was drafted by an officer who was not only a good and competent officer, but one who was careful in the choice of his words in addressing the British Headquarters.

Message to be more carefully drafted

Admiral Lacaze said that what I had said corresponded entirely with the feeling of the French Ministers. For himself, he would like to add that either Commander-in-Chief, in the event of his receiving any document that was perhaps hastily drafted, and was couched in terms calculated to give offence, instead of remaining sullenly dissatisfied, should seek an early interview with the other Commander-in-Chief, in order to clear the matter up.

The Conference was attended by four French Ministers. After a good deal of palavering the trouble was once more arranged. Clumsy dispatches had been reproved and sore heads had been poulticed. As far as I know, there were no further personal embarrassments or misunderstandings in the way of effective co-operation between the two generals*

Agreement reached

But all this friction made for delay. It was common to both the Chantilly and the Nivelle plans that the Allies should be ready during the first fortnight in February. It was already the first fortnight in

March and the Allied Commanders were still wrangling about preliminaries. During this period French Ministers and the French Military Chiefs were quite convinced that the British High Command and the British War Office were deliberately working against the successful achievement of the Nivelle plan. The latter made no concealment of their dislike for the